



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

FEB 3 2006

John J. Gosek, Mayor
City of Oswego
City Hall
13 West Oneida Street
Oswego, New York 13126

Dear Mayor Gosek:

This is in response to a request by the City of Oswego, New York for a categorical exclusion (CATEX) from substantive environmental review requirements, pursuant to 40 CFR Part 6, for Phase I of its East Side Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Long Term Control Plan.

The project involves construction and modification of various pieces of equipment and appurtenances at the City's existing East Side Wastewater Treatment Facility, as the initial phase of a long term plan to reduce the frequency and magnitude of combined sewage overflows to the Oswego River and Lake Ontario. The City has applied for Special Appropriation Act grant funding for the project, which is being implemented pursuant to an April 2004 Consent Order between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the City of Oswego.

Based on our review of the supporting documentation, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approves the request for the CATEX. Please be reminded that EPA may revoke this CATEX if any of the following conditions occur:

- changes in the proposed action render it ineligible for exclusion;
- new evidence indicates that serious local or environmental issues exist; or
- federal, state, or local laws would be violated.

Should you have any questions regarding this decision, please address them to John Filippelli, Chief, Strategic Planning and Multi-Media Programs Branch, at the above address.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Callahan
for Alan J. Steinberg
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

cc: A. Leotta, P.E, City Engineer

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ENCLOSURE

City of Oswego Oswego County, New York Phase I - East Side CSO Long Term Control Plan Proposed Special Appropriation Act Grant Project

Background

The City of Oswego, New York, is served by a system of combined sewers, which were originally designed to convey both stormwater and sanitary wastewater to local waterways for disposal. Subsequently, these sewers were redirected sewage treatment facilities which were designed for dry weather flow conditions. As a result, the system's conveyance and treatment capacity was exceeded during wet weather, resulting in the overflow of discharge of untreated wastewater to local water bodies. Although the City has since implemented a number of sewer separation projects, they have not completely eliminated all overflows. As a result, there are still a number of locations where untreated combined sewage overflows (CSOs) continue to exist. Therefore, an April 2004 Consent Order with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation requires implementation of the City's 2002 three-phased Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan, pursuant to its State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) Permit.

Proposed Action

Phase 1 of the Long Term Control Plan consists of a number of improvements to the City's East Side Sewage Treatment Facility to enable it to process the increased volume of combined sewage that would result from eliminating overflows of combined sewage from the sewer system.

These improvements, all of which would occur on the existing site of the East Side Sewage Treatment Facility, consist of the following:

1. Increasing the volume of combined sewage that can be treated at the facility, by constructing a new 350' long, a 18" diameter, influent pipe parallel to the existing influent sewer pipe.
2. Replacing existing non-operational wastewater screening equipment with new mechanical bar screens and screw press equipment.
3. Providing additional chlorination equipment.
4. Installing of new dechlorination equipment.
5. Installing automatic sampling equipment in the overflow detention basin, a baffle to retain floatables during wet weather, and a return pump to convey the basin's contents back to the treatment facility after a storm event.

Alternatives Considered

In addition to the proposed action, "No Action" was considered. It would result in continued overflows of combined sewage to the Oswego River and Lake Ontario during wet weather. It would also be contrary to various federal, state, and local requirements mandating elimination of health hazards and bypasses of partially treated wastewater. Furthermore, the 2004 Consent Order with the NYSDEC requires the facility to implement the proposed improvements to comply with its SPDES permit, and enable future phases of the plan to be implemented. Consequently, "No Action" is not a viable option.

Criteria for Granting a Categorical Exclusion

The project meets the general Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) eligibility criteria found in 40 CFR 6.107(d)(1). The regulations allow CATEXs for activities involving "actions which are solely directed toward minor rehabilitation of existing facilities, functional replacement of equipment, or toward the construction of new ancillary facilities adjacent or appurtenant to existing facilities."

Additionally, the available information on the proposed action indicates that the specific criteria for not granting a CATEX, found in 40 CFR 6.505(c)(1), are not present. Specifically, the project will not result in a new or relocated discharge to surface or ground waters; will not increase the amount of pollutants discharged to receiving waters; nor will it provide capacity to serve a population significantly greater than the existing population. Furthermore, there will be no significant adverse effects on cultural resources, endangered or threatened species, environmentally sensitive areas, or other environmentally important natural resource areas.

Conclusion

The proposed action conforms to the category of actions eligible for exclusion under 40 CFR 6.107(d)(1). Accordingly, EPA approves this request for a CATEX from detailed environmental review pursuant to our procedures for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act.